

CREDITING SMOOTHIES

Smoothies can be served in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP), including the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. The USDA recommends that smoothies are not offered at more than one meal or snack per day. Smoothies credit differently depending on whether they are made from scratch on site or commercially prepared.



SCHOOL-MADE SMOOTHIES

Pureed fruits and vegetables in school-made smoothies credit only as juice toward the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements. Crediting is based on the actual volume of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving, as documented by the standardized recipe. Concentrated fruit puree and concentrated juice are added sugars and do not credit toward the meal pattern unless they are reconstituted to full-strength fruit puree or full-strength juice.

Juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings in the NSLP or the SBP. Menu planners must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward this limit. The crediting requirements for smoothies are summarized below.

- Milk must be low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored. Milk used in smoothies may credit toward the milk component. However, a variety of fluid milk must also be offered on the serving line to meet the USDA requirement to offer a variety of milk options for the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and preschoolers (ages 3-4) served in the NSLP and SBP.
- Yogurt and soy yogurt can credit as a meat alternate in school-made smoothies. However, they do not serve as a substitution for fluid milk, which must be offered separately to meet the milk component requirement. Meat/meat alternates other than yogurt cannot credit when served in smoothies.
- Grains such as oatmeal cannot credit when served in smoothies.
- Smoothies can include additional ingredients to improve flavor and consistency, such as oatmeal and peanut butter. These ingredients cannot credit toward the meal pattern requirements but must count toward the weekly dietary specifications. They must contain zero trans fat and their inclusion cannot cause the menu to exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, see “Dietary Specifications” in the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

The example below shows how a smoothie made with blueberry puree, yogurt, milk, and oatmeal could contribute to the meal pattern requirements.

Ingredient	Crediting
Frozen blueberry puree, ½ cup	½ cup fruit juice
Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup	1 ounce equivalent meat alternate
Fat-free milk, 4 fluid ounces	4 fluid ounces fat free milk *
Oatmeal, 2 tablespoons	None
* A variety of fluid milk (low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored) must also be offered separately to meet the milk component requirement.	

CREDITING SMOOTHIES, continued

Crediting Smoothies Made with Vegetables at Lunch

Pureed vegetables in school-made smoothies credit only as juice toward the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements. At lunch, vegetable smoothies containing one vegetable subgroup or one vegetable juice credit toward that subgroup. For example, a smoothie made with pureed carrots or 100 percent carrot juice credits toward the red/orange subgroup.

The crediting of smoothies containing two or more different pureed vegetables or vegetable juices depends on whether the vegetables are from the same or different subgroups.

- **Same Subgroup:** Smoothies that contain pureed vegetables and vegetable juice from the same subgroup contribute toward that vegetable subgroup. For example, a smoothie containing pureed carrots and tomatoes, or a 100 percent carrot/tomato juice blend, credits toward the red/orange vegetable subgroup because both vegetables are from the red/orange vegetable subgroup.
- **Different Subgroup:** Smoothies that contain vegetables and vegetable juice from more than one subgroup can only contribute to the “other” vegetable subgroup. For example, a smoothie containing pureed carrots (red/orange), spinach (dark green), tomato (red/orange), and watercress (dark green) or a 100 percent vegetable juice blend containing carrots, spinach, tomato, and watercress credits toward the “additional” vegetable subgroup.



Fruit and Vegetable Smoothies

Smoothies made with a combination of pureed fruits and vegetables contribute to the fruit and vegetable requirements only as juice and must meet the applicable juice limits. Smoothies that contain a mix of pureed fruit and vegetables or that contain 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends, contribute to the fruits component if fruit juice or fruit puree is the predominant ingredient. If vegetable juice or vegetable puree is more predominant than the fruit juice or fruit puree, the smoothie contributes toward “additional” vegetables.

Signage Requirement

The USDA regulations require school nutrition programs to identify the food components offered to students. Schools serving smoothies should inform students about the components included by listing the type of smoothie on the menu and serving line signage, e.g., “peach and milk smoothie” or “strawberry, yogurt, and milk smoothie.” For more information, see “Meal Identification Signage” in the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).



COMMERCIAL SMOOTHIES

Commercial smoothies made with pureed fruits or vegetables credit only as juice toward the fruits component. The product label should include a statement regarding the “percent juice content,” which is required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for beverages made with fruit/vegetable juice or puree. For example, an 8-fluid ounce smoothie made from fruit puree with the juice content labeled as “contains 50% juice” credits as 4 fluid ounces or ½ cup of juice. Schools may need to obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer that documents the amount of pureed fruit in the product. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Product Formulation Statements*.

Commercial smoothies do not meet the USDA requirements for fluid milk or yogurt because they do not comply with the FDA standard of identity for milk or yogurt. Smoothies with dietary supplements such as whey protein powder or herbal supplements such as ginkgo biloba, ginseng, and echinacea are not creditable in Child Nutrition Programs.

RESOURCES

Create a Reimbursable Meal Smoothie (New England Dairy & Food Council):

www.newenglanddairycouncil.org/docs/Smoothies/Smoothie%20card.fnal.pdf

Crediting Foods (CSDE Web Page):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=333796

Crediting Juice:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/creditjuice.pdf

Food Buying Guide for School Meal Programs:

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=334320

Product Formulation Statements:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/pfs.pdf

Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA Memo SP 10-2014(v.3), CACFP 05-2014(v.3), SFSP 10-2014(v.3)): www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP10_CACFP05_SFSP10-2014v3oss.pdf

USDA Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables and Fruits:

www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pfsfv.pdf

USDA Sample Product Formulation Statement for Vegetables:

www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pfssamplevegetables.pdf

Vegetable Subgroups:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/vegsubgroup.pdf

CREDITING SMOOTHIES, continued



For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) and [Meal Patterns](#) and [Crediting Foods](#) Web pages or contact the [school nutrition programs](#) staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

This handout is available at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nsfp/crediting/creditsmoothie.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;*
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or*
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.*

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